



HEALTH POLICY

(Psychological Mental Health)

Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. By free will one shapes one's own life.

The Rule of St Augustine

Preamble

The NESET Analytical report 2021, 'A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and well-being in schools in the EU' by Carmel Cefai, Celeste Simões, Simona C.S. Caravita outlines that:

- *"In the 21st century, education needs to go beyond narrow sectoral goals such as academic achievement. In addition, it should contribute actively to the health and well-being of children and young people, whose mental health needs are becoming more evident and demanding."*

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all years at St Augustine College.

Statement of intent

- Mental health issues can affect a student's emotional wellbeing as well as their educational attainment.
- The school environment has multiple pressures that can provide a catalyst for mental health issues, including the pressure of exams and deadlines as well as the desire to make friendships and maintain them.

Objectives of this policy

- To show both students and their parents that the College is committed to the wellbeing of its students.
- To signal to students that the College is understanding of mental health issues and encourages them to come forward with their difficulties.
- To prepare our students to have the skills and resilience to lead healthy lives now, and into the future.

Key Staff Members:

The College is continuously investing in spaces and ensures proper staff is in place to cater for our students' needs as much as possible. This, together with the parents' cooperation ensures that we support our students in their emotional growth.

To support our students' wellbeing and psychological mental health the following stakeholders are available at our College, overseen by the Rector and Head of Primary/Secondary Campus:

- Class tutors and Assistant Heads, who strive to foster a class and year group community respectively, which promotes positive mental health and wellbeing among students
- Guidance teachers to ensure direct contact with each student is done to help them express themselves and build a strong moral character to achieve the necessary skills
- A Counsellor, Social Worker, and Youth Worker who attend our campuses on a weekly basis to offer professional services to our students and families as need be
- Designated Safeguarding Officer who coordinates the psychosocial team to ensure that issues are channeled right to make the best out of the human resource available in the planning of a student's care plan.
- Chaplain and Assistant Chaplain who contributes to students being following especially in aspects of morality and faith to ensure a holistic follow up.

Identifying Needs and Warning Signs: (adapted from www.richmond.org.mt/signs-symptoms/)

A student is to be offered wellbeing support services upon disclosure by the student, or through the observation by any member of the College community, of any of the sign and symptoms below:

- Changes In Sleep Patterns: Struggling to sleep or sleeping more than usual
- Substance Use: smoking, drinking or drug use
- Drop in Functioning: A sudden and unusual drop in usual activities
- Lethargy: Significant tiredness and low energy
- Extreme Sadness: Often feeling sad and alone
- Mood Swings: Rapid or dramatic shifts in emotional state
- Withdrawal: Wanting to be alone and uninterested in social activities
- Appetite Changes: Eating more or less than usual
- Confused Thinking: Problems concentrating or remembering things
- Nervous Behaviour: Feeling nervous and suspicious of others
- Increased Sensitivity: Heightened sensitivity to sound, smell or touch
- Feeling Disconnected: A feeling of not being part of your surroundings
- Increased Anger: Getting unusually angry or violent
- Random Aches and Pains: Experiencing unexplained physical ailments
- Thinking of Harming Themselves: Non-suicidal self-injury or suicidal thoughts

Managing Disclosures and Confidentiality

Referral for support:

- Where possible members of the College community should report primarily to the Assistant Head in charge of the year group unless one feels that it is a matter to be directly referred to the Rector, Head of Campus, or DSO directly.
- The Assistant Head with liaise with the DSO, and/or guidance teacher in charge of the year group, to plan the student's care effectively.
- Should the matter need professional input from the professionals within the psychosocial team the DSO will refer accordingly to them to start working with the student.

Personal data and written notes taken in sessions:

- Any storage of such information is supported by the College's data protection policy.

Confidentiality

- When a student discloses in confidence and shares with an educator or professional how they think and feel, confidentiality is maintained and information will only be shared with the appropriate staff when relevant to their safety in school or learning needs.
- Should there be a safeguarding concern raised, this will need to be shared with the DSO and following that, parents, police or other relevant agencies will be contacted as appropriate through the professionals allocated to our campus.

Parental Involvement:

- Our students' parents and guardians are to be kept informed of the wellbeing support their son receives and meeting are to be requested as need be from all stakeholders involved.
- Students' confidentiality will be kept unless the student:
 - expresses serious intent to harm himself or someone else;
 - there is evidence or reasonable suspicion of abuse against him; or
 - a court order is received directing the disclosure of information.

Version December 2022